

surface, *H. principalis* having the entire breast, belly, and flanks pinkish vinaceous, while in *H. simplex* the underparts are bluish grey with a faint purplish wash. Both species have the middle of the belly white.

The only note which Alexander has made on this bird is that it was numerous amongst the cocoa plantations.

Count Salvadori (Orn. Golfo d. Guinea, i. 1903, p. 16) gives a list at the end of his paper of doubtful or erroneously identified species from Prince's Island.

These include a species of *Lanius*, *Sylvia*, and *Motacilla*; also *Cinnyris splendidus* (Shaw), *Chalcomitra senegalensis* (Linn.), *Lamprotornis ænea* (Gm.), and *Melanobucco vieilloti* (Leach); he does not consider that any of these should be included as having occurred on the island.

Dohrn also did not believe that any of the last four species mentioned had ever been met with on the island. They were originally included as having occurred on Prince's Island on the authority of Erman, whom Dohrn proves to be quite unreliable.

Dohrn also remarks that he is certain *Neophron pileatus* Burch. does not occur on Prince's Island. It was included on the authority of Lopez de Lima, who never personally visited the island.

*Neophron pileatus* is a South African species, but it is very likely that *Neophron monachus* occasionally wanders to the islands in the Gulf of Guinea. An inexperienced observer might very easily mistake one for the other.

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XXXIX.—*The Gannetry at "The Stack," Orkney Islands.*

By J. H. GURNEY, F.Z.S.

(Plate XXVI.)

SITUATED nearly forty miles to the west of the Orkneys are two small islands, known collectively to seafaring men as Stack and Skerry, of which the former, where the Gannets are, is about 130 feet in height and covers six acres. Here these birds are supposed to have bred from time

immemorial, which most probably they have done, for the Gannet is a very conservative bird.

Unfortunately, we know but little of the early history of the Stack, that useful writer Donald Munro, who travelled among the Hebrides as a minister in 1549, omitting to include it in his list of Scottish islands. A bare mention of it by Sir Robert Sibbald in 1710 alone proves to the naturalist that Gannets bred there then. In his 'History of the Sheriffdoms of Fife and Kinross,' this author, who was president of the Edinburgh College of Physicians, says (p. 47):—

"They are misinformed, who write that these Fowls [Solan Geese] are found nowhere else in *Scotland* but in the Bass; for they are found in several of the West Isles, particularly in the Isle *Ailsa*, in the Firth of *Clyde*, and in the desert isles, adjacent to *Hirta*, called *St. Kilda's Isle*, and in a desert isle belonging to *Orkney*, and divers others."

The "isle belonging to *Orkney*" here mentioned can surely have been no other than the Stack, though not actually known to Sibbald by its proper name.

As regards the Gannet population of the Stack, there has been a very wide divergence of opinion. Years ago Captain Samuel McDonald of the fishery cruiser 'Vigilant,' who had probably never landed upon the Stack, although he may have been well acquainted with it at a distance, and who seems to have been a man given to exaggeration, assessed its strength at fifty thousand (*see* 'Report on the Herring-Fisheries of Scotland,' 1878, p. 171), but that it ever attained to such proportions is improbable in the last degree.

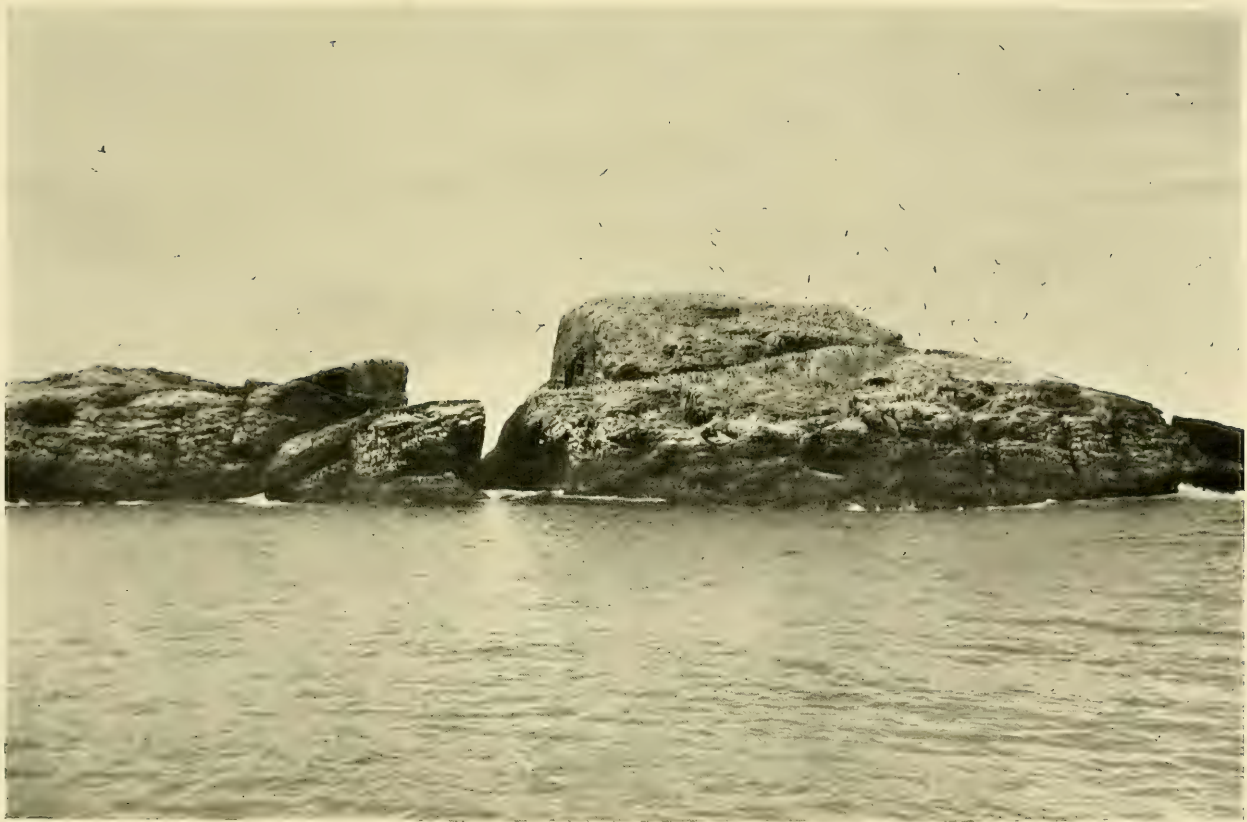
As all we have heard about the numbers of the Gannets at the Stack hitherto has been decidedly vague—even Professor Newton, who was there in 1890, not trusting himself to anything definite—it was with satisfaction that the writer learnt that Her Grace the Duchess of Bedford had paid three visits to the Stack during the past summer, viz., on May 17, June 19 and 22, 1914, for the express purpose of making observations on the Gannets.



1. LARGELY IMMATURE GANNETS.
2. GANNETS' NESTS.

3. GANNETS' NESTS.
4. KITTIWAKES' NESTS.

EAST SIDE OF THE STACK.



MENPES PRESS, WATFORD.

A dead calm is required for landing on the Stack, and, although the weather was very fine, and the Duchess of Bedford's yacht was able to go so close as to be within little more than a ship's length, the chief officer decided that there was too much swell to risk going ashore.

Several good photographs were taken by the Duchess, which have since appeared in 'The Scottish Naturalist' (1914, p. 176, plates i.-vi.) in illustration of an article upon Scottish Islands. The one here selected for reproduction (Plate XXVI.) was taken on the east side and, with a magnifying glass, crowds of Gannets can be seen upon it, particularly on the northern half. It is only, I learn, on that half of the island, and only upon that portion of it (No. 3) which is above the dark line that Gannets nest, but they also nest upon the highest point (No. 2) of the southern half.

On May 17 the number of Gannets actually on the Stack was not very large, but nesting-operations were not yet in full swing, and numbers of them which probably belonged to this settlement were observed by the Duchess collecting seaweed and other materials several miles away.

But on June 19 the scene was quite different, the Gannets had returned, and the bulk of them appeared to be then at home. After careful consideration the Duchess now formed an opinion that 5000 would be a fair estimate of the Stack Gannetry—at any rate, she considers the estimate of 8000 given in 'The Gannet, A Bird with a History' (p. 325), to be too high.

The Duchess has informed me that both the great rocks into which the Stack is divided, and which form two islands separated by a narrow channel, were crowded with Gannets on the arrival of the yacht. This was on June 19, but she particularly remarked that no nests were to be seen on the smaller island, excepting a few at the extreme point.

On the smaller island, it was noticed that at least one in six of the Gannets was immature—not all young birds of twelve months, but birds of the age of two years, or nearly so, which still retained some black plumage. On the larger island, on the other hand, the proportion of immature Gannets was much smaller. As regards the over-estimation

of the Gannets on the Stack in the past, she is of opinion that it has been largely due to the vast quantities of other sea-fowl scattered amongst them. There are thousands of Guillemots and Kittiwake Gulls on the Stack, and, taken altogether, they probably confused Captain McDonald's eye at a distance.

The Duchess had been asked to obtain, if possible, whilst on her cruise, some confirmation of the nesting of Gannets on North Rona. This was reported to Mr. John Swinburne to have been the case when he was there in 1883 (*see Proc. R. Phys. Soc. Edinburgh*, viii. p. 65). The Duchess, however, could learn nothing authentic about it, but she does not consider the Rona cliffs adapted to Gannets, and the report may have originated in error. Yet their propinquity to Sulisgeir, where there are supposed to be 8000 Gannets (*see 'The Gannet,' p. 325*), makes it probable that Gannets have occasionally bred there.

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XL.—*Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.*

*Aiken and Warren on the Birds of Colorado.*

[The Birds of El Paso County, Colorado. By Charles E. H. Aiken and Edward R. Warren. Colorado College Publ. Sci. Ser. vol. xii. 1914, pp. 455-603, 24 plates.]

The pleasant town of Colorado Springs, lying at the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains and overshadowed by Pike's Peak, which reaches an elevation of over 14,000 feet, is the chief town of El Paso County in the State of Colorado. Mr. Aiken has resided in the town more or less continuously since it was founded in 1871, and all his leisure time has been devoted to observing and collecting the birds of this region. The junior author, Mr. Warren, came to Colorado Springs in 1881, and has interested himself in both Mammals and Birds, and in 1910 published an excellent manual of the Mammals of the State.

The joint authors are therefore in every way fully qualified for their task in preparing a list of the birds of El Paso